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STATE FOR A/S BETH JONES, EUR/NB, AND EUR/ERA

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TAGS: [CASC](#) [EU](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [SMIG](#) [TU](#) [FI](#)

SUBJECT: ASSISTANT SECRETARY BETH JONES' MEETING WITH  
FINLAND'S FOREIGN MINISTER ERKKI TUOMIOJA

REF: NONE

Classified By: POLOFF DAVID ALLEN SCHLAEFER FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

Summary

1. (C) During her November 8 meeting in Helsinki with Finnish Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja, Assistant Secretary Jones said that the Administration was already talking about reinvigorating the transatlantic relationship, and said that one of the purposes of her trip was to ask Finland's views about this. FM Tuomioja replied that U.S. "re-engagement" in the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative (BMENA) and Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) was at the top of Brussel's priority list, and that the current situation with Arafat afforded both risks and opportunities to push the peace process forward. A/S Jones expressed concern about the ongoing Rogers child-custody case, and FM Tuomioja said that he was confident the Finnish courts would resolve the situation. Asked for his views about how the U.S. and EU could positively engage Russia, FM Tuomioja opined that Moscow did not understand how the EU works and was engaged in futile attempts to split EU countries over certain issues. A/S Jones and FM Tuomioja agreed that the U.S. and EU should not shy away from human rights concerns in Chechnya and acknowledged signs that the Russians again were willing to discuss frozen conflicts such as the Transnistria and South Ossetia disputes. FM Tuomioja said that the EU's statements on Ukraine's election had possibly been too harsh; FM Tuomioja and A/S Jones agreed on the importance of not giving up on democratization in Ukraine.

2. (C) A/S Jones thanked the Foreign Minister for Finland's contributions to coalition efforts inside Afghanistan and Iraq. After the successful elections in Afghanistan, the next big challenge was eradication of opium poppy cultivation. FM Tuomioja agreed, remarking that U.S. and EU agricultural policies do not facilitate viable alternatives to poppy cultivation for poor farmers. FM Tuomioja also advocated getting tough with Afghan Government elements involved in narcotics trafficking. A/S Jones expressed U.S. solidarity with Finland's support for Turkish EU accession, prompting the Foreign Minister to opine that while an early date for accession talks was desirable, simply establishing a concrete date was the most important step. At the request of Finland's Under Secretary for Political Affairs, A/S Jones offered to put the Finnish officials in touch with U.S. diplomats in Russia who are handling the State Department's anti-trafficking in persons efforts there. Finally, noting that Arctic climate change threatened the entire Arctic region, the Foreign Minister hoped the upcoming Arctic Council meeting in Reykjavik would spur efforts to ameliorate this. A/S Jones replied that the U.S. was also looking forward to the meeting and seeing the Council's new report. End Summary.

Second Term Priorities

3. (C) A/S Jones stated that, with the election behind us, Secretary Powell was actively preparing for several major

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meetings, including the OSCE ministerial, and NATO and USEU summits. The Administration wanted to reinvigorate the transatlantic relationship. She called the FM's attention to the President's reference to this in his November 3 press conference. FM Tuomioja said no one should forget that transatlantic cooperation was already working and delivering results in most areas, and that where differences remained, there were effective ways of dealing with them. The Foreign Minister said that he hoped Secretary Powell would indeed remain in office, and that he looked forward to seeing him again at the NATO meeting, and perhaps in April in New York at the next meeting of the Helsinki Process.

4. (C) A/S Jones said one of the purposes of her visit was to ask for his ideas on ways that transatlantic relations could be strengthened during the President's second term. The Foreign Minister replied that the Broader-Middle East and MEPP was the "number one item" among EU members, who expected the U.S. to "re-engage" and jumpstart the process. He said

that while Arafat's death could lead to instability, it also afforded a window of opportunity should the U.S. choose to seize it. A/S Jones said that although she could not speak for the White House, she knew the State Department was indeed considering how best to use the Arafat situation to promote a peaceful solution in the Middle East.

Rogers Case  
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15. (C) A/S Jones said that there was concern in Washington over the ongoing Rogers case, in which a Finnish mother has refused to obey U.S. and Finnish court orders requiring her to surrender her two dual-national children to their U.S. citizen father, and expressed hope that it would soon be resolved. She noted that Finland needs to obey the letter of the law. Tuomioja replied that it was a "messy" case and not primarily the responsibility of his ministry, although he acknowledged that Finland was bound by international treaty. He said that he had faith in Finland's legal system and that he believed the case would be cleared up soon. Jones underscored the importance of complying with the Hague Convention.

Russia  
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16. (C) A/S Jones asked FM Tuomioja for Finland's perspective on how the U.S. and EU should approach Russia to bring about positive engagement. FM Tuomioja said that he believed Russia had unrealistic or ignorant expectations about how to approach the EU. The Foreign Minister said that Moscow wanted Finland to be a bridge between Russia and the EU, not understanding that Finland was itself an integral part of the EU. Russia did not understand how the EU worked or was evolving; Moscow believed it could selectively choose what issues it wished to address bilaterally with EU nations in order to drive wedges among EU members. Such a strategy was doomed to fail. Some EU countries had been more "forthcoming" with Russia on issues like visa policy, which had probably weakened the EU's position; hence the need for the EU to follow common policy where it existed. FM Tuomioja opined that the postponement of an EU-Russia summit originally planned for November 11 was due to Moscow's inability to limit the agenda to such "wedge issues." A/S Jones agreed that it is good for the Russians to understand there is a limit to how far they can push the EU.

Chechnya  
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17. (C) The Foreign Minister said that the EU and U.S. should not shy away from issues such as human rights in Russia, specifically the situation in Chechnya. Finland fully supported Russia's need to aggressively combat terrorism, but that did not legitimate human rights abuses. A/S Jones agreed, noting that the fight against terrorism did not justify backsliding on democracy. FM Tuomioja cited the need for Russia to find a "legitimate partner" with whom they can reach a political solution in Chechnya. A/S Jones said that Russia wanted the U.S. to label all Chechens as terrorists, obviating the need for political talks. FM Tuomioja mentioned a recent flap over a Chechen website on a Finnish server that was accused of inciting terrorism in the Caucasus, advising that Finland had taken up the issue of its own accord, not because of any Russia request or pressure; Secretary Jones said that Russia had approached the U.S.

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about shutting down a similar website located in Texas.

Ukraine/Belarus/Frozen Conflicts  
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18. (C) FM Tuomioja and A/S Jones agreed on the importance of not giving up on democratization in Ukraine. A/S Jones said that, even though real concerns existed, the Ukrainians needed to hear the message that opportunities existed for participation in transatlantic institutions, including eventual EU membership, if progress continued. She said that Ukraine might be ready for WTO membership within a year, a huge step toward a better future. FM Tuomioja said that while the EU could not say "yes" to Ukraine now, it would be a mistake to say "never." There were interim stages of integration that could be explored. He said that the EU's statement on the recent election could possibly have been "too tough," as the elections had gone better than he expected. Jones said that like the EU, the U.S. believes that no matter what the outcome of the elections, the U.S. cannot turn its back on Ukraine.

19. (C) The Foreign Minister asked A/S Jones semi-rhetorically if an independent Belarus had a future, arguing that Belarus was a paradox as reintegration with Russia would actually improve the region's human rights. A/S Jones replied that there was scant enthusiasm in Moscow for such a solution. A/S Jones noted that Russia was at least willing to schedule

discussions on frozen conflicts such as Transnistria and South Ossetia again.  
Caucasus/Central Asia  
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10. (C) A/S Jones asked FM Tuomioja about the situation in Central Asia. FM Tuomioja replied that he had visited only Kyrgyzstan, the only place in the world where a Russian and American military base co-existed. He said that Finland had no specific advice on Central Asia other than the EU could play a useful role in the region. A/S Jones mentioned that the region had institutional associations with Europe via NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) and other similar arrangements. The PfP has been good for Central Asia, not least for improvements in the way the governments treat their soldiers. FM Tuomioja mentioned that he planned to visit Kazakhstan in January. A/S Jones opined that the biggest challenge to the region will be its upcoming political transitions and the need for Central Asian polities to see that democratic transitions can work.

11. (C) FM Tuomioja noted he had recently visited Armenia and Azerbaijan, where there seemed to be a new willingness on both sides to show some flexibility. Here again, Russia is the key. A/S Jones said this seemed to be an area where the Russians are willing to engage in a constructive way, but the parties remain so volatile that it is hard to make any progress. A/S Jones and FM Tuomioja agreed that neither the Armenian nor Azerbaijani Governments had done a good job of preparing their publics for an eventual settlement, despite what progress might have been made in private bilateral discussions.

#### Climate Change -----

12. (U) The Foreign Minister said that a meeting of the Arctic Council in Reykjavik would consider a new report on climate change in the Arctic region. He said that it was undeniable that such change was taking place, which could have devastating effects for the region's future. Tuomioja said that he did not expect the U.S. to change its position on the Kyoto Protocol, but hoped it would address important environmental issues, and perhaps engage in negotiating a "Kyoto Two." A/S Jones said that the Administration was definitely interested in looking at the facts and the science of the issue. FM Tuomioja stressed the importance of the Arctic Council in bringing together representatives of the Arctic's indigenous peoples (sic) with the regions' governments. Such meetings of regional fora are all to the good, he said -- an example being the eight-plus-one consultations under e-PINE. Political Director Lyra seconded this assessment.

#### Trafficking-in-Persons -----

13. (SBU) A/S Jones asked the Foreign Minister about Finland's recent anti-TIP activity, specifically in the areas of victim assistance and prosecution. FM Tuomioja said that Finland had recently adopted new anti-TIP legislation and was confident its implementation would bring improvements in all areas. He cited the recent break-up of a Russian-organized prostitution ring in Helsinki, hoping that Finland's progress would be "reflected in future evaluations." Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Jaakko Laajava said that Finland's greatest obstacle in combating trafficking was internal conditions inside Russia. A/S Jones replied that the U.S. was working aggressively with NGOs inside Russia to go after trafficking rings, ameliorate the conditions that led to trafficking, and educate potential victims about the dangers involved. Laajava asked A/S Jones for information about the partners the U.S. was working with inside Russia, and she promised to ask U.S. diplomats to put him in touch with the appropriate people in Moscow and St. Petersburg. FM Tuomioja added that Finland enjoyed an increasing measure of trilateral cooperation with Russia and Estonia on the TIP issue.

14. (C) FM Tuomioja lamented that the Russians are moving border guards from their side of the Russian-Finnish border to southern regions, which increases the burden on Finnish border guards. A/S Jones recalled Finland's very good training programs for Central Asian border authorities, and asked whether that is continuing. U/S Laajava said only that "it will be many years before our experience can produce added value" in the "totally different environment" of Central Asia.

#### Afghanistan/Iraq -----

15. (SBU) A/S Jones thanked the Foreign Minister for Finland's contributions to the efforts inside Iraq and Afghanistan. Election in Afghanistan had been far better than we had dared hope. One of the biggest challenges now

was to eradicate opium poppy cultivation to stop the drug flow out of the country; it was necessary to find economic alternatives for poppy farmers so that they could survive without resorting to poppy cultivation. FM Tuomioja agreed that the elections had been successful, and added that it would be good if the Iraqi elections were also as successful, although that seemed more difficult. He said that now that Afghanistan had a democratically-elected government, the international community had to be tougher on government elements involved in narcotics trafficking. He agreed that finding economic alternatives for small farmers was a general problem everywhere that narcotics were produced, and argued that U.S. and EU agricultural subsidies and protective barriers exacerbated the problem.

¶16. (C) A/S Jones said that in Iraq our focus is on helping to build a legitimate police and military, along with reconstruction generally. She thanked the Foreign Minister for Finland's readiness to contribute a million euros to a UN protection fund in Iraq. Discussions were underway in NATO about how best to proceed with the training of Iraqi military forces. (Note: At a press availability that followed the meeting, the Assistant Secretary also thanked Finland publicly for Finland's contributions to reconstruction and stability in Afghanistan and Iraq.)

Iran

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¶17. (C) FM Tuomioja said that he was hopeful the Iranian response to the EU "nuclear" package might be positive, and that he believed that there were some signs this might be the case. If not, the international community faced a very serious problem.

Turkey/Cyprus

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¶18. (C) A/S Jones said that the U.S. was grateful for Finland's position on eventual Turkish accession and would do what it could to keep the Turks moving down the path of necessary reform. The U.S. had done its best, working behind the scenes, and hoped the EU had noticed. The Foreign Minister replied that this was appreciated, but wryly asked that the U.S. not be "too helpful" and interject itself in such a way that opponents of Turkish accession could use U.S. support for Turkey as a straw man. FM Tuomioja said that the present government of Turkey had made more progress toward substantive reform in two years than the previous government had made in twelve. Finland hoped the EU Commission in December would set a concrete date for the beginning of accession talks. FM Tuomioja opined that whether the date was earlier or later was unimportant, but that the establishment of a concrete timetable was the primary concern. Political Director Lyra said that the latter half of 2005 was most often mentioned in Brussels as the likely timeframe. Both FM Tuomioja and A/S Jones agreed that it was necessary to keep up the pressure on Turkey as regards Cyprus, and that confidence-building measures such as the withdrawal of some Turkish troops from the north would be positive. They also agreed on the difficulty of working with Cypriot President Papadopoulos.

¶19. (C) FM Tuomioja said that during his visit to Yerevan, the Armenians had asked for help in getting the Turks to open the border; some Turkish officials have privately sympathized with the Armenian goal, "but the Turks have pushed themselves into a corner." A/S Jones replied that the USG is working hard on this; train transport is the first priority.

ESDP/Security Policy

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¶20. (C) FM Tuomioja said that Finland's Parliament would endorse the general outline of the recently released "White Paper," although there would probably be many minor revisions and changes. A/S Jones said that the U.S. was pleased that Finnish interoperability with NATO was stressed in the report.

¶21. (U) A/S Jones has cleared this cable.

Participants

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Finland:

Erkki Tuomioja, Foreign Minister  
Jaakko Laajava, Under Secretary for Political Affairs  
Markus Lyra, Director General for Political Affairs  
Paivi Luostarinen, Director General for the Americas and Asia  
Marianne Huusko-Lamponen, Special Advisor to the Foreign Minister  
Leena Liukkonen, Counsellor, Unit for North America

United States:

¶A. Elizabeth Jones, Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs  
Earle I. Mack, Ambassador of the United States to Finland

Robert Weisberg, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy Helsinki  
Theresa Grencik, EUR Special Assistant  
Helene Kessler, Information Officer, Embassy Helsinki  
David A. Schlaefer, Political Officer, Embassy Helsinki  
MACK